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AUTHOR Fertman, Carl I.; And Others  
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## ABSTRACT

Under Subtitle B Part I, Serve-America, of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, \$1.1 million was awarded to fund 44 school-based service-learning programs in Pennsylvania. A study collected data on program implementation and impact on students, Serve-America coordinators, and supervisors during visits to 43 sites and at meetings with site coordinators. Disseminator (schools and community-based organizations) and minigrant (service-learning) programs were funded. Five variables were evaluated as indicators of implementation: organizational commitment, integration, parental support, advisory councils, and materials. Ten percent of all programs benefited from all five variables being strong and reinforcing. More than 50 percent were implemented as planned. Generally, students expressed satisfaction, but their dissatisfactions included lack of support from school staff and other students, not enough time at sites, and insufficient clarity concerning the program and their roles. The program increased coordinators' personal satisfaction and excitement, but added stress and work. Service-learning had both a positive and negative impact on supervisors. Stressors were longevity and institutionalization of the programs, loss of funding, and involvement of all students. Challenges were identified, and recommendations were made to develop a vision statement and a work plan. Three elements of an evaluation system were already in place: empowered evaluation, tracking and monitoring, and mentoring/consultant infrastructure. (YLB)

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# **The Pennsylvania Serve-America Grant: Implementation and Impact Year 1**

Prepared for PennSERVE:  
The Governor's Office of Citizen Service  
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Carl I. Fertman, Ph.D.  
Irving Buchen, Ph.D.  
Joanne Long, MPH

The Pennsylvania Service-Learning  
Resource and Evaluation Network  
School of Education  
University of Pittsburgh  
5D21 Forbes Quadrangle  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
(412) 648-7196, Fax (412) 648-7191

## **Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network**

The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network at the University of Pittsburgh is working with all the PennSERVE Serve-America programs. The network is a source of communication, support, resources, and guidance. Its philosophy is to work with people by providing systematic data of a wide variety of types that help inform them about things they care about. The primary goal of the network is to help each PennSERVE Serve-America site evaluate its service learning program.

For more information please contact Carl I. Fertman, Ph.D.,  
Director, The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and  
Evaluation Network, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh,  
5D21 Forbes Quadrangle, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, (412) 648-7196, Fax  
(412) 648-5911

The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network is supported by a grant from PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service, 1304 Labor and Industry Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120, Telephone 717-787-1971, Fax 717-787-9458

## Executive Summary

"The Pennsylvania Serve-America Grant: Implementation and Impact" is a report of the PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service, first year activity under the Commission on National and Community Service, Public Law 101-610, Subtitle B Part I Serve-America award, to involve school-aged youth in service to the community through school and community based organizations.

The focus of the report is the implementation and impact of service-learning programs in Pennsylvania. All data for the current report were collected during visits to 43 PennSERVE Serve-America sites in the months of April, May, and June 1993 and at meetings on June 2 and 8, 1993 with all site coordinators. A separate report of participant hours and service activities is in preparation consistent with the national evaluation information system guidelines.

The report provides answers to two questions:

**\*\* Did PennSERVE accomplish its goal of implementing service-learning programs in schools and community based organizations?**

**\*\* What are the impacts of the programs on students, program coordinators, and supervisors at the end of year one?**

The report concludes with a summary of programmatic issues and concerns the schools and community based organizations will face during the next 12 months and the identification of a number of critical issues and opportunities PennSERVE will encounter in the year ahead.

The overall conclusions of the report: Pennsylvania has successfully implemented its Serve-America grant program; 90% of its programs were implemented as planned; the programs have had an often dramatic but always positive impact on students; an intervention has occurred in the routine of the classroom, in the predictable operation of the school environment and in the day to day workings of the community where the full effect is yet to be fully felt and evaluated.

**The Pennsylvania Serve-America Grant:  
Implementation and Impact  
Year 1**

## Acknowledgements

This report is the first in a series of working papers, reports, briefs, and essays by Pennsylvanians about service-learning. It reflects the leadership of John Briscoe. It reflects the time, energy, and commitment of thousands of people we met as we drove the state highways and backroads visiting each site, talking to young people, being part of advisory board meetings, conferring with agency directors, principals, and superintendents and seeing the learning of students as it happened. Your efforts and dedication are greatly appreciated.

Recognized for their hard work and tireless dedication to PennSERVE are Dee Spindle and Sharon Lanzino. Recognized for their assistance in putting together the Year 1 Report are Laura Bitner, Mark Evans, Ellen Olsen, Heather Simpson, and Elizabeth Marinelli. Thank you.

Recognition is also accorded to the community based organization staff and directors, school teachers, counselors, and administrators, parents, and community leaders who took time to talk with us and who each day support service-learning in their communities and schools. Your support is appreciated.

Each site coordinator is recognized. All of them. They each wrote their own book. Many come with color pictures, tapes, newspaper articles, and student journals. They are David Aboud, Elaine Amos, Nancy Beenetz, Cynthia Belliveau, Bev Bonkoski and Florence Chapman, James G. Bower, Jennifer L. Brown, Marilyn Brown, Marianne Calenda, Vincent Caputo, Carol Clegg, Linda Epstein, Joyce Fosdick, Kathy Frey, Diane Galaton, Jack Giran, Victoria Goffredo, Linda Harker, Audrey F. Harvey, Zeb Jansante, Brent Johnson, Valerie Jones-Pugliese, Russ Kenyon, Jim Kraky, John Lafferty, Donald Lee, Carol Lucas, Bill Lupini, Tom Marcinko, Cynthia J. Martin, Alan Ozer, C. Tina Petrone, Jennifer Ragan, Tom Reintgen, Gary D. Robinson, George Seiler, Jeff Singleton, John Skief, Bobby Stewart, Marilyn Talboys, Margaret Valinsky, Phyllis Walsh, Annette Williams, and George P. Ziegler. Thank you all.

Most important are the thousands of children and adolescents who make service-learning happen. Their contributions are many. They make our schools, communities, neighborhoods, and families stronger through their service-learning experiences. Thank you for sharing.

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## Section 1 Background

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-610, as amended) created the Commission on National and Community Service to provide program funds, training, and technical assistance to states and communities to develop and expand opportunities for national and community service. Under Subtitle B Part I Serve-America, the Commission awarded \$16.3 million to support new or ongoing efforts to involve school-aged youth in service to the community through school and community based organizations. The primary focus of Serve-America (representing at least 60% of its funding) is the development of school-based service-learning strategies that integrate service into the academic and extra-curricular life of school for grades K-12. In Pennsylvania \$1.1 million was awarded to fund 44 programs statewide and to develop a service-learning support and evaluation network to support these programs.

The current report focuses on the implementation of the 44 programs and their impact on students, Serve-America program coordinators, and supervisors. All data for the current report were collected during visits to 43 PennSERVE Serve-America sites in the months of April, May, and June 1993 and at meetings on June 2 and 8, 1993 with all site coordinators. A separate report of participant hours and service activities is in preparation consistent with the national evaluation information system guidelines.

## Section 2 Implementation

*"When people find out how good these kids are and what they can do, they're goin want to know how they can have more of them do more." (Community member - Elizabeth Forward)*

*"Service, what service, this is a science class" ( 9th grade girl - Moshannon Valley School District)*

*"I asked to talk to six students involved with service-learning. I was clear, I thought, about the number I asked to speak with. I promised to be brief: maybe ten minutes, at the most fifteen minutes. In walked 24 students. We talked the entire period" (Evaluator field notes - Derry Area School District)*

**Did PennSERVE accomplish its goal of implementing service-learning programs in schools and community based organizations? The answer is yes.**

Two types of programs were funded: disseminators and mini-grants. Disseminator grants went to schools and community based organizations (CBO's) with demonstrated experience, organizational commitment, and community support. Twelve disseminator grants were funded. Mini-grants were to initiate service-learning programs. Prior experience was not a prerequisite for funding. Interest and organizational commitment were. A total of 34 mini-grants were funded. The breakdown of the programs by setting, location, and focus are displayed in figures 1 and 2.

|                              | Disseminator grants | Mini-grants |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Total Grants                 | 12                  | 32          |
| School                       | 10                  | 27          |
| Community Based Organization | 2                   | 5           |
| Rural                        | 1                   | 16          |
| Suburban                     | 4                   | 5           |
| Urban                        | 7                   | 11          |

**Figure 1 Grants by setting and location**

|                   | Disseminator grants | Mini-grants |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Elementary School | 1                   | 3           |
| Middle School     | 1                   | 6           |
| High School       | 10                  | 23          |

**Figure 2** Grants by school focus

Five variables were identified for examination and evaluation: organizational commitment, integration, parental support, advisory councils, and materials.

**Organizational commitment** is the thrust of a program. It is the tangible and spirited guidance, reinforcement, assistance and support provided to the service-learning program by an organization. It signals the priority within the organization; and frequency, in the culture of the school, that service-learning is perceived as a strategy for change.

**Integration** is penetration. It is concerned with the degree to which service-learning is infused into learning through the curriculum, staff preparation and support, and academic credit. It also defines the degree to which it becomes part of the organizational mission.

**Advisory councils** are forums for advocacy. Required wisely as part of the grant, their effectiveness is measured by the number of its members, number of meetings, and member's organizational diversity.

**Parents** are the learning partners of service-learning. They play many roles. They develop youth; they support the development of service opportunities. They are role models and beneficiaries of service. Parent support is assessed through parent awareness, involvement, and communications.

**Materials** represent the goods and services produced by service-learning. The quantity and quality of program products is staggering. Moreover, programs also access materials and other resources from various support systems and thus multiply the results. Networking draws together the National Center for Service-Learning and School Change, Pennsylvania Institute for Environmental and Community Service-Learning, Generations Together, Center for Intergenerational Learning and VYTAL Program.

System wide variables, such as, the lateness of funding, slow contracting process, poor PennSERVE communications and service-learning's high political profile, surprisingly, did not differentially affect programs. The distribution of frustrations and struggles is universal and always associated with new initiatives and creative work.

Differences did exist between programs in terms of implementation. Program implementation falls into one of four categories: **Yes Plus, Yes, Yes Minus, No But**. Although the categories are subjective they serve as a vehicle to help understand the implementation process.

**Yes Plus** implementations represent ten percent of both disseminators and mini-grant programs. All benefit from all five variables being strong and reinforcing. All are differentiated by very strong organizational commitment. In these programs, service-learning was integrated as a teaching strategy; have large, diverse advisory councils; parental involvement is extensive; and numerous materials are created and acquired.

Such programs capture the spirit of the school. An example is Keystone Elementary Program which built the school around service. The Elizabeth Forward High is permeated by service-learning. These programs have gone beyond their stated goals.

More than 50% of the programs are categorized as **Yes** and were implemented as planned. They enjoy strong organizational commitment. They are strong in the areas of integration and accessing and creating materials. The advisory councils of the programs have diverse membership. The councils are active. But the parent component of these programs is weak. Parents are interested, but parent awareness, involvement, and communication are scattered or occasional.

**Yes Minus** programs as a group experienced an organizational struggle which partially interfered with their implementation. They account for 30 % of the programs. An example is a change in the coordinator. A person who had no previous service-learning experience suddenly found himself or herself in charge of the program as an additional responsibility. As a consequence, the programs' integration and advisory councils suffered, as also did parent awareness, involvement, and communication. Nevertheless these programs typically have maintained links to materials and support, and have produced materials.

The final programs are **No But**. They comprise 10% of the programs. These programs are uniformly weak or very weak across all five variables. The organizational commitment initially present at the writing of the grant was not sustained with the receipt of the grant. Without that central commitment, the programs' integration, advisory council formation, parental involvement, and materials development suffer. When **No But** programs succeed, they tend to be programs built on the strength and skills of one person. Without the organizational commitment and advisory council support to confront all the bureaucratic issues, these programs are always fragile. They are handicapped before they start. They struggle.

|                  | Yes Plus | Yes | Yes Minus | No But |
|------------------|----------|-----|-----------|--------|
| Commitment       | VS       | S   | S         | W      |
| Integration      | S        | S   | W         | VW     |
| Advisory Council | S        | S   | W         | VW     |
| Parents          | S        | W   | VW        | VW     |
| Materials        | S        | S   | S         | W      |

**Figure 3** Categories of implementation by five variables. Rating scale is VS = Very Strong, S = Strong, W = Weak and VW = Very Weak

The five variables are indicators of implementation. Figure 3 shows the rating for each variable by implementation category. Of the five, obtaining and maintaining organizational commitment was a priority for each program. Creating and accessing materials was the second priority. Integration, advisory councils, and parents are the next areas of focus within the five variables.

Program implementation is a process carried out over time. The effect on the process of any one variable's strength or amount or the combination of variables is at this point unknown. Future reports will address this issue.

### Section 3 Impact

*"I didn't know math was so much fun" (Student, Kennedy Crossan Elementary School)*

*"I learned I can lead" (Student, Kensington High School)*

*"The students take pride in their projects and do not vandalize or destroy them " (Teacher, East Lycoming School District)*

*"We are modeling future schools" (Assistant Superintendent, Scranton School District)*

*"There is great potential for school change and to change the 'culture of learning' (Coordinator, Furness High School)*

*"Older citizens often, for the first time, appreciate youth" (Advisory Council Member, Derry Area School District)*

The three groups most involved in and most impacted by service-learning are **students, program coordinators, and supervisors of Serve-America program coordinators**. These three groups have the most contact with the programs. Service-learning, good or bad, has touched their lives. Students are the life blood of service-learning. They are the reason it exists. Coordinators are the front-line of service-learning. Their job is to make it happen. They wrote the grants, traveled to conferences, made the connections, and continue to be the leaders. Supervisors provide the support and link the program to the bigger organization.

The current report focuses on the impact service-learning has on students, coordinators, and supervisors. Future reports will focus on the impact of service-learning on advisory council members, teachers, community based organization staff, and community members.

**Service-learning exists for students. They are its life blood.** Students involved in service-learning span elementary school, middle school and high school levels.

Academic learning and personal development: these represent the core of the programs' impacts on students. Transformative experiences have served to empower students, to bring life back in their school days and to recreate a desire to learn and succeed. Students have fun.

It is an incredibly frustrating task to attempt report the positive experiences noted by students within the scope of this document. Comments of students themselves most accurately represent this phenomenon and give powerful insight into the workings of service-learning.

One student's comment captures the twofold benefit of the program by describing the paradoxical nature of "giving" as benefiting both the recipient and volunteer. These students have learned that they can have a voice in the community, can have an intergenerational effect upon how youth is perceived, can attain peer status in an adult world of work environment, and can become functioning and valued members of their communities. Students expressed wonderment at the appreciation and respect shown them at their sites. More concrete benefits reported by students were learning their academic subjects in a new and challenging way, affirmation of practical skills, exposure to the real world of work and opportunities for career exploration and career testing, as well as material to present on college and employment applications. Students learned to function in teams and developed leadership characteristics.

Although expressions of satisfaction were many, students dissatisfactions occasionally surfaced. These expressions included lack of support from school staff and other students, not having enough time at the sites, and insufficient clarity of program and their roles. Revealingly, during student evaluations at one site, students expressed frustrations with the lack of respect from adults and staff, with a stereotype of not being able to do the work, with not being recognized for their service and similar issues. When asked if these dissatisfactions were enough to have them think about quitting, the response was encouraging and revealing as service-learning appeal: "NO, you have to deal with them and can't quit!" In summary, the overwhelmingly positive experiences of participation far outweighed any problems students faced. The opportunity to translate themselves and to test themselves in an adult real world situation offered students an opportunity unique to their experience.

In the upcoming stages of service-learning, students would like to see the program expanded to include more students, more classes, more sites, extended student roles, and to begin earlier in the year. The issue of voluntary versus required participation was also reported as needing examination. Many students reported lack of teacher support for their participation; efforts to orient teachers and to better connect service-learning with the curriculum might minimize this aspect. To meet these requests, greater preparation and time are needed.

**Coordinators are the front-line of service-learning.** Their job is to make it happen. The program impacted on their lives by increasing personal satisfaction and excitement, but also adding stress, and work.

For 25% of the coordinators, the program impact was overwhelmingly positive. They participated in the grant writing and design and had experience with grant management and implementation. They had anticipated many of the initial details. They were already setup and operating. They were able to harness the energy from the initial excitement of learning and used the grant to propel themselves beyond their anticipated goals. They were empowered leaders.

The impact of the additional stress and work for half of the coordinators was considerable. Their lives were more complicated and demanding. They reported many personal satisfactions and rewards. However, at times, these were overshadowed by the paperwork, bureaucratic red tape, and feeling overwhelmed by the grant. They got worn down by the work. For the most part, they did not anticipate the amount and pace of the work the grant required.

A final 25% of the coordinators were impacted by events beyond their control and which tended to draw them away from the grant activities and rewards. For example, the lawsuits in one district kept the coordinator focused on legal issues, which were interesting, but interfered with her duties. Some were waiting for job reclassifications. In these cases, they had anticipated the job of coordinator as part of their responsibilities in a new position. However, they found themselves doing their old jobs plus being the grant coordinator. Likewise, a few coordinators were assigned to the job late in the school year, with no prior knowledge of service-learning. In most cases, their initial expectations were unrealistic. Some coordinators were poorly received by the systems they were trying to impact. This left them frustrated.

At the end of year one, the anticipated turnover rate of coordinators is 20%. Review of the first year data revealed that the coordinator position in many schools and community organization is evolving. It is not seen as being the responsibility of a particular group or department. It is a responsibility that can be reassigned. Likewise, it can be anticipated that a number of coordinators would change due to teacher leaves, sabbaticals, illness and new job assignments. For example, one coordinator is now a long term substitute teacher awaiting a permanent assignment. Anticipated budget reductions will also impact some positions.

Coordinator turnover reinforces the fact that service-learning is a "new program." Staff movement is common in all new human services and education programs. More established programs experience less personnel movement.

**Supervisors are pivotal. They support the link to the bigger organization.** Supervisors typically are principals, superintendents, executive directors, or board presidents. Although generally they are positive about service-learning, in most cases their knowledge of service-learning is limited. Competition for their time and energy is keen. The red tape and bureaucracy associated with any grant means more work for them.

Service-learning has had both a positive and negative impact on supervisors. For example, supervisors from both disseminator and mini grant sites reported mixed progress, but with more positive progress overall. Funding, bureaucracy, and resistance from some students, faculty, and parents were noted as frustrating factors. On the other hand, all of the supervisors expressed satisfaction with the warm community response toward the programs. Enhanced school image, positive feedback, and high levels of enthusiasm were all noted as initial responses to the programs. Although many supervisors reported that they were not surprised by anything that transpired, others were pleasantly surprised by the high levels of community support and student involvement.

The negative impact of service-learning on the supervisors is demonstrated through their concerns and anxieties about the longevity and institutionalization of the programs. Many of the supervisors expressed extreme reliance upon the coordinator for the ongoing success and functioning of the program. Many expressed complete trust in their coordinators when asked about program monitoring. For example, some stated that they would let the coordinator do his job and asked to be informed only about statistics, accounting, and major problems.

The second highest stressor was the loss of funding for the program. The supervisors stated that the service-learning programs could not exist without it. The supervisors had reported spending a considerable amount of time doing project budgeting and accounting.

The third highest stressor was involving all students in service-learning, particularly those educationally/academically at-risk. Negative student behavior and the potential for a tarnished school image were identified as possible reasons for program failure and negative community relations. Overall, the supervisors were concerned that the teachers, parents, students and the community might lose interest in service-learning in the future.

## Section 4 Programmatic concerns and issues

Based on the analysis to date, it is predicted that programs will face a series of challenges during the upcoming twelve months.

The good news is that the programs are already working to address the challenges. The extent of their plans and preparations is largely a function of their level of development.

**\* Service-learning is young.** Some programs trace their roots back to the 1988; others to 1992. CBO's and schools are still trying to figure out what it is. At the same time, they are attempting to differentiate it and determine its relation to concepts such as outcome based education, community education, apprenticeships, school reform, vocational education, field trips, and class projects. The concept of service-learning as a teaching strategy that every teacher might use is evolving. Frequently it is focused on at-risk students and drug prevention, which is too narrow a focus and minimizes the full potential of service-learning as a teaching method.

**\* Eight key ingredients of service-learning programs** Evaluation tells us that commitment and interest are not enough. Eight key ingredients are necessary to make a service-learning cake. They are students, adults, advisory council, service activity, linkages, community support, parents, and communication. Realistically, programs need to choose one or two ingredients and try to work on them over time. Additionally each ingredient has several elements. For example, the students' elements are preparation, reflection, monitoring and celebration.

**\* Student success measures:** - The ultimate determination of whether service-learning succeeds as school reform is the degree to which it can be shown that service-learning impacts student success measures. Each program needs to identify a concrete way to measure the effects of service-learning.

**\* Coordinator's roles** - Coordinators' roles vary. Depending on the program, the coordinator's role could be that of a service club advisor, classroom teacher using a new teaching strategy called service-learning, grant administrator, lead teacher supporting colleagues interest in service-learning, in-service instructor, or director of a school volunteer action center. Coordinators need help in figuring out their roles.

**\* Problems:** As programs develop problems, will develop. It is natural and expected. At the June 2 and 8 meetings for example, time was spent discussing problems the coordinators had encountered. Furthermore, time was dedicated to brainstorming alternatives and solutions. Problems encountered implementing the programs included teacher support, service-learning advocacy and marketing, fiscal issues, time constraints, and communications.

## Section 5 PennSERVE Implications

Given all this information, what can PennSERVE do? Several actions by PennSERVE are recommended to help progress be achieved. To a large degree the actions are natural consequences of overall system development.

1. \* Vision statement: PennSERVE has to anticipate the needs of the programs it funds and evaluates. It needs to develop a vision statement, a five year plan of growth and development to identify the critical issues and areas of future leadership and support.

2. \* Work Plan: The work plan will evolve as an outgrowth of the vision statement. The work plan includes all of PennSERVE's activities as well as specific goals and expected outcomes for each title activity (Serve Corp, Serve-America). As part of the work plan, strategies to address critical areas would be developed and shared, for example, linking the grantees within title activity and across title activity or providing support and technical assistance.

Clearly the Serve-America program is successful. The competition for resources and technical assistance will intensify. Expectations for the program are already increasing. PennSERVE's provision of communication, guidance, resources, advocacy, and coordination can provide the underpinning to continue the growth begun by the positive impetus of initial implementation.

## Section 6 Conclusions - Multiple Measures -- Multiple Impacts

Although this report will be supplemented by additional analysis and evaluation, and although this is only the first year of operation of the grants, certain conclusions seem inescapable.

### A. Timing

If service-learning is an idea whose time has come, it is also a time whose idea has come. Service-learning has emerged at a time when there is a historical need for educational change. Moreover, service-learning tends to be reinforcing and linking in its relationships, principally in its ability to reconnect the school to the community and the community to the school. Above all, service-learning seeks to structure a partnership between self esteem and intellectual development that is at the heart of lifelong learning.

To be sure, panaceas for K-12 have come and gone; fads have surfaced and disappeared within one year. Is service-learning any different? Hopefully, yes, because it is broad-based, not singular, in focus and because it comes at a time when only broad-based constituencies can restore confidence in public education.

### B. Not Just Change -- But Transformation

If there is a danger of excess advocacy for service-learning, it is that of **overselling** -- of appearing to sound like a revivalist preacher talking about being born-again. And yet again and again that is what evaluation uncovers and discovers. Classroom and curricula seem to be reinvested with reality; teachers find special satisfaction in managing, not dominating, the learning process; administrators for the first time in many years strut proudly before public groups, school boards, senior citizens, even city councils because now schools do not just take but **give back to the community**; citizens previously down on teenagers are often now their biggest boosters; service clubs dominated primarily by the retired and elderly now sense a new lease on the future working with young students; community agencies severely underfunded suddenly find a new transfusion of volunteers to help staff their understaffed programs. And last, but certainly not least, the students themselves often experience an emotional and academic growth spurt in one year (often after many years of slumber) defying all predictions. The recurrent phrase heard again and again from teachers, parents, administrators, even friends is, "I can't believe it is the same kid."

### C. The Challenge of Evaluation

Service-learning does so much, involves so many, is simultaneously so immediate, yet long term, that it poses a formidable task for evaluators. No single measure will suffice; even multiplying the number of measures begs the question, for still they may miss all the interaction between the parts. In addition, because most community evaluators know little about schools and most school evaluators know little about communities a common interface is lacking. At PennSERVE, we are persuaded that service-learning is breaking new ground and requires a new evaluation system and approach. The components of the new evaluation system are emerging, and although what that finally may be is not yet fully in hand, three key elements are clear and in place.

#### **1. Empowered Evaluation**

The evaluation process must be administered and delivered closer to the **operational level**. Moreover, teachers and students need to be not just the objects of evaluation but the managers of it. But for empowered evaluation to take hold, the evaluation process must be, on the one hand demystified and, on the other, user friendly. That has been one of the principal goals of The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network.

#### **2. Tracking and Monitoring**

The dilemma is one of richness. The programs themselves are complex. They involve numerous projects, hundreds of students, thousands of hours, different community and agency players, etc. In addition service-learning itself is essentially developmental and distributes its **growth in so many different directions**, often simultaneously, that it resembles the reverberating effect of the stone striking the water and sending out wider and wider circles. The problem then is a mix of the quantitative and qualitative. Detailed monitoring is necessary just to keep track operationally of all that is going on. At the same time, monitoring needs to be done to identify the branch points of change, intervention and transformation. Moreover, since many students increasingly perceive service-learning as a way of testing future careers and as a leg up for competing for scholarships and admissions to prestigious schools, service-learning has also to find ways of documenting and validating its own activities -- developing in effect a service-learning transcript. PennSERVE and The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network have encouraged the use of electronic software to monitor and track the activities of the program using students to provide input into the system (they want to run it anyhow). The goal is to generate a disc for each student that records all the service-learning activities. Essentially, the student can send a copy of that disc with his application to college.

### 3. Mentoring / Consultant Infrastructure

Because of the complex multiplicity of service-learning projects (it is very much like a school within a school) and further because it turns the classroom around to face outwardly to the larger community, the service-learning coordinator (who basically is a classroom teacher transformed overnight into an administrator), often is overwhelmed. That coordinator needs massive support, especially during the first year. The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network provides that support. Materials, meetings, phone conversations and all site visits provide each coordinator with his or her own consultant/broker and mentor. Every conceivable problem is discussed: the budget, problems with the principal, the roster, the schedule, logistics, difficulties with other teachers, classroom materials, operational issues, etc. In addition, the coordinator is made aware of other consultative individuals and organizations available to make his or her life more interesting and manageable. The net result is that coordinators are surrounded by a support system that will not let them fall off the edge. At the same time, they are connected to a network that enriches and extends their project.

Above all, the The Pennsylvania Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network consultants in their site visits experience and evaluate the program in miniature. Typically, the evaluator meets with administrators, parents, members of the advisory council, students, community agencies, sometimes even the Mayor and the City Council. As a result, the consultant replicates the multiple constituencies of the coordinator and thus is able to minister comprehensively to the coordinator's reality. The foreground is thus matched by the background. Behind every grant stands a strong commitment of expertise, savvy and leverage committed to the success of the coordinator and the program. Given the range and complexity of service-learning, that kind of support is minimally a norm. Perhaps, it should be a norm for all teachers.

## **Appendix A Evaluation site visit planning letter to coordinators**

Robert Howard, Service-Learning Coordinator  
Service-Learning  
Service, PA 12345

Dear Robert:

As promised, here is the next step in the PennSERVE evaluation: member profile and site visit information.

I ask that you complete the member profile. Please answer all the profile questions and collect the requested materials (Don't worry, there are no right or wrong answers.) Our goal is to get a picture of what is happening in each program and to help you think about how you want to evaluate your program. Please make a copy of the profile for your records.

The site visits are planned for April, May, and June. The major focus of the visit is to review the completed member profile. A typical visit is 3 to 4 hours. Reviewing the profile takes about two hours. We also are required to meet with the advisory committee (45 minutes), your supervisor (30 minutes) and 8 to 10 students in a small group for 30 minutes. During each meeting individuals will complete a survey.

From your supervisor, we are interested in gauging organizational support and interest. With the advisory committee, we will explore developmental issues, service activities, collaboration, and linkages. The time with students will focus on the value of service.

You will be telephoned by either Irv Buchen, Joanne Long, or myself, Carl Fertman, during the next few weeks to set up a day to visit.

We will also have an evaluation meeting at the PennSERVE Conference on April 19. Please reserve the date. The mini-grants and disseminator grants will have separate meeting times. It will be a chance for us to talk and answer questions. Likewise, we will meet in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in early June. Call if you have questions. Thanks for your help and cooperation. We look forward to visiting you.

Best wishes,

Carl I. Fertman, Ph.D.

cc: Irv Buchen(215) 635-8933  
Joanne Long (412) 648-7188

enclosures: site profile

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PA Service-Learning  
Resource and Evaluation Network  
School of Education  
University of Pittsburgh  
5D01 Forbes Quadrangle  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

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